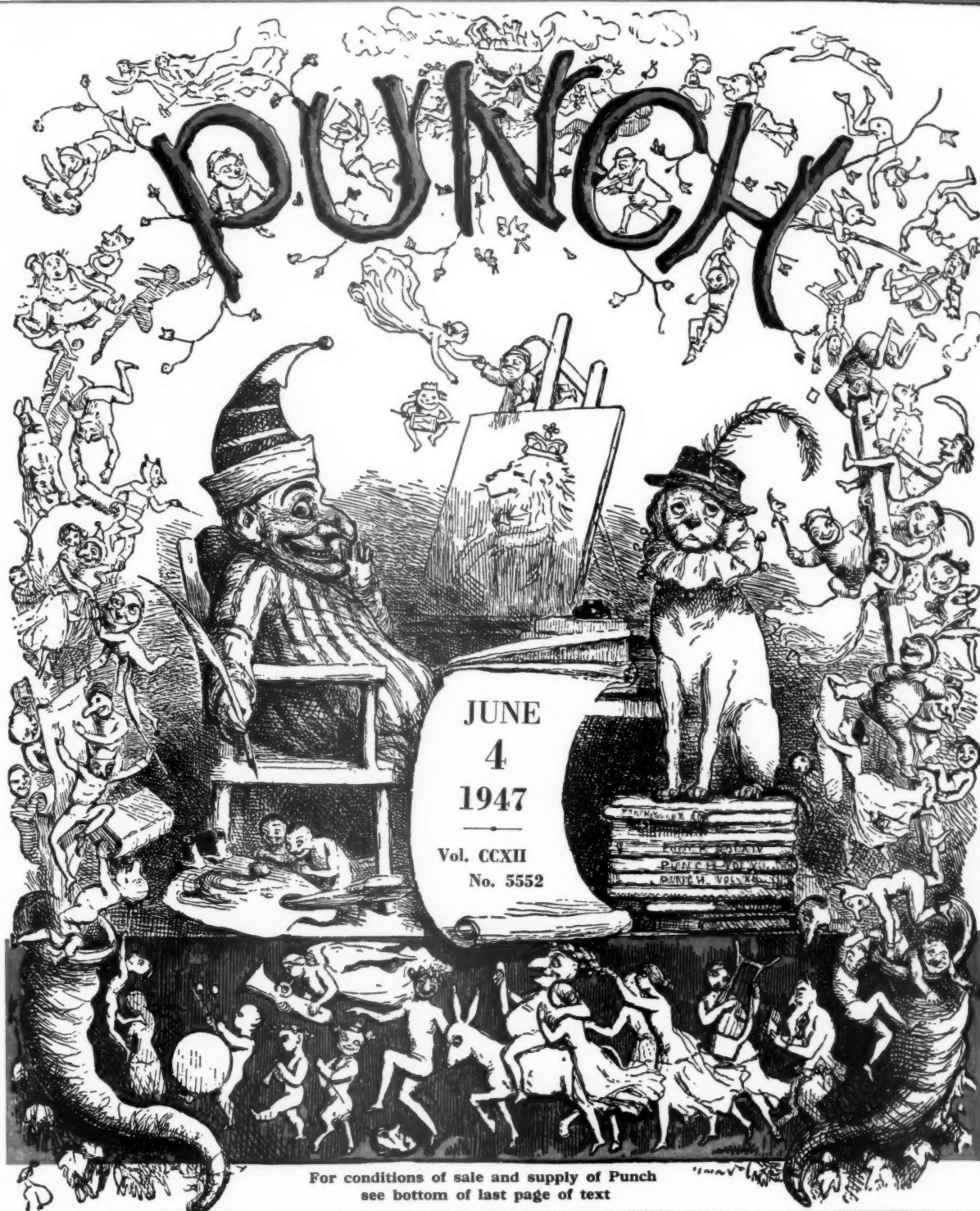


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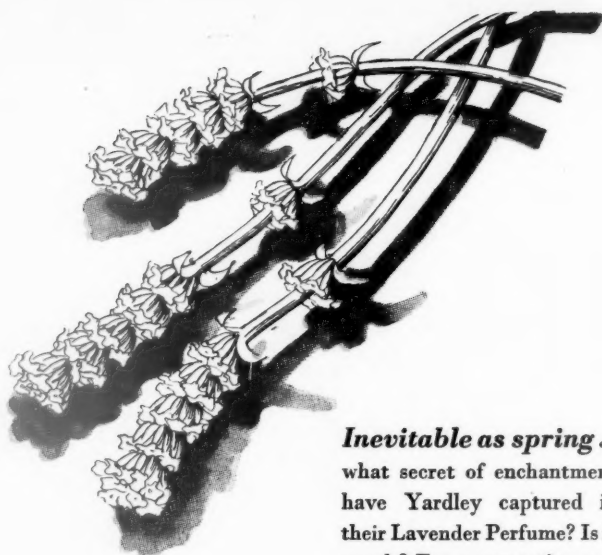


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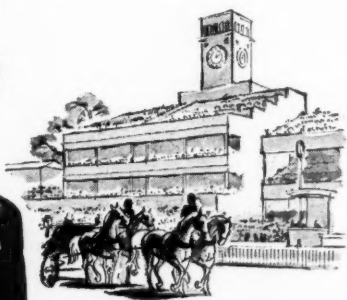


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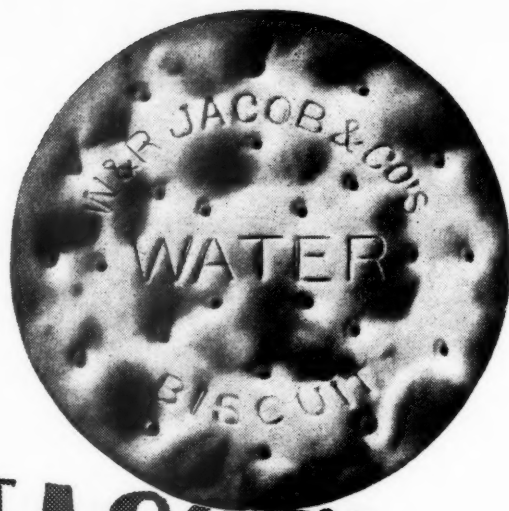
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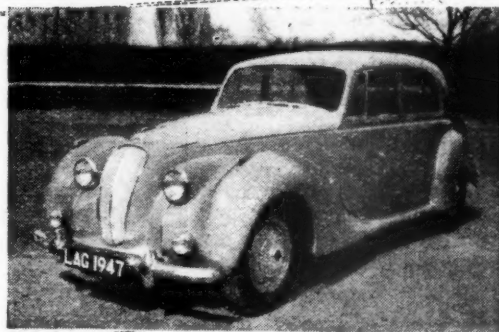
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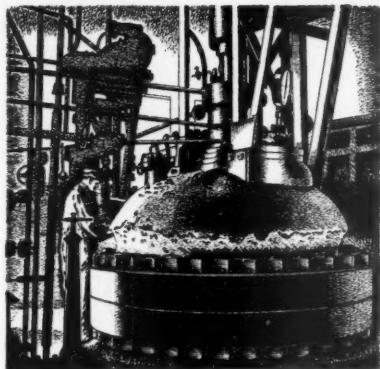
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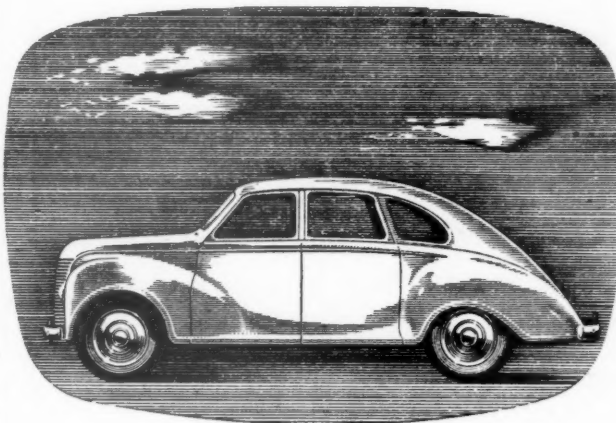
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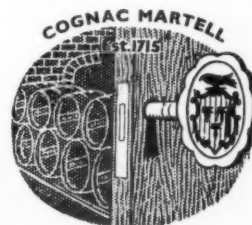


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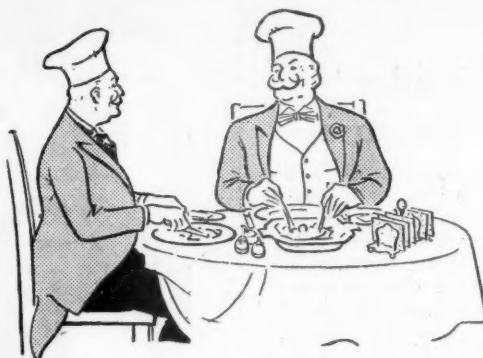


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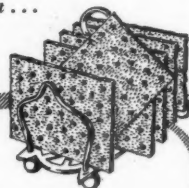


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Holiday Guide from A. F. Baxter,
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Setting for Silver



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writes:

"The Royal Cancer Hospital is doing work of which the Nation should be proud. It is fighting this fell disease—trying to establish its cause and discover a cure—providing beds for patients and keeping those who are inoperable free from pain.

If those who have contemplated, even for an instant, the possibility of being one day themselves in the clutch of cancer subscribe to the fund, the present difficulty of raising sufficient money to continue the work should be easily overcome."



Photo: Walter Stoneman, London

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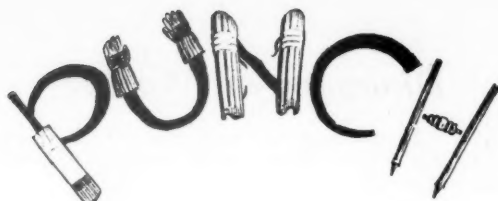
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OR

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXII No. 5552

June 4 1947

Charivaria

A MAN who was charged with damaging a Government poster will not be working or wanting for the next fourteen days.

According to police reports, more daylight smash-and-grab raids take place on Wednesday than on any other day of the week. Surely it is about time the Government extended its mid-week ban to events of this sort.



"Lost, between Calderstones and Wavertree, Cigarette Case; sentimental value."

Advt. in "Liverpool Echo."

Quite.

A judge has decreed that a person who has money owing to him may ask for it as often as he likes with impunity. This will annoy people who have been making inquiries about their war credits only every other day.

A suburban grocer who displayed table jellies ready to eat in his window reports that the scheme resulted in larger sales. After a shaky start.

"For the next total eclipse visible in this country we must wait till 1999."—"Observer."

Well, we'll try, but some of us may have to leave before that.

It is said that the skating of the members of the chorus of an "ice revue" is brilliant and sparkling. Would "coruscating" sum it up?



"My wealthy octogenarian great-aunt has suddenly started smoking cigarettes," says a correspondent. As a prospective legatee he is naturally much perturbed.

It appears from figures recently issued by tobacconists that smokers are gradually getting back to abnormal again.

"AS AMERICANS SEE THE ENGLISHMEN
'TOO MANY HAVE HANDS IN THEIR POCKETS'"

Headlines, "Daily Express."

Whose pockets is not quite clear.

"Even if he were dressed in his best cricket-flannels," declares a woman writer, "no self-respecting Englishman would shrink from plunging into dirty water to save the life of a dog." No, but his best cricket-flannels might.

"If a lion or lions are seen approaching, do not assume that this is a charge. They are merely hoping for food..."—From the current Handbook of the Royal East African Automobile Association.

Feel better now?

Owing to the strength of the sun, many footballers have been wearing peaked caps on the field, but it is not anticipated that they will adopt pith-helmets before midsummer.



Disorganized Worker

IT is the day of the organized worker. His name is on all men's lips. It is agreed that he should have more money, shorter hours, less income tax to pay, a clear voice in his country's foreign policy and, as far as possible, nylons for his wife. His interests were freely referred to at Margate; and what Margate thinks to-day, or thought last week to be accurate, Westminster thinks to-morrow. I draw the conclusion that it is a good thing to be an organized worker.

Am I an organized worker? Probably not. I am not quite clear what an organized worker is, but I have a fairly definite idea of what he is not. I should say that a man who works with his typewriter balanced on top of an old pair of flannel trousers is not an organized worker. I doubt whether the simultaneous presence on his desk of three newspapers, two pipes, a broken lighter, a calendar for April, a piece of fuse-wire, a pair of secateurs, and last year's *Whitaker's Almanack* open at page 496 qualifies him for inclusion in that category. It is possible that Mr. Herbert Morrison, chancing upon such a scene, might say "Here, if anywhere, is one of those useless mouths, one of those people engaged in activities which are a hindrance to the national effort." He might go further, if he stayed to see the way in which the typewriter carriage jams against vol. 4 of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* (1908 edition), every time it runs out to the left.

I have accordingly returned vol. 4 to its shelf—this without reluctance since it carries the reader no further than "Friction," a tedious subject rightly defined as one of the two main hindrances to motion and work, whereas the point on which I wished some time ago to be informed concerned Frigga, the wife of Odin, a very different kettle of fish. *Whitaker's Almanack* I have shut but not removed. It would be the height of disorganization to put it away before I have remembered what it was I had to look up. Page 496 gives some interesting statistics about Public Schools in the British Dominions (annual fees for boarders at Otago School, Dunedin, N.Z., were then £77, for instance), but I cannot believe that this was the information I was after.

The grey flannel trousers are more easily explained than removed. Organized workers keep their clothes in their homes and work elsewhere in buildings provided by some scoundrelly employer. Disorganized workers, or drones, not infrequently pursue their useless avocations in a combined study-cum-dressing-room, with elements of the tool-shed about it and occasionally a touch of the nursery or the kitchen in odd corners. This is no great hardship, heaven knows, compared with the lot of the houseless or the single-room family, but it leads to the presence of grey flannel trousers under the typewriter.

I have been trying to work out a plan for getting these trousers put away. The first point to note is that the typewriter will have to be moved before the trousers can be got at all. Where is it to go? If I set myself to clear a space for it elsewhere on the desk or on the small table or the thingummy or the top shelf of the book-case I shall set up a ripple of things being moved to make room for other things that will spread outwards to the cupboard under the stairs and lap against the roof of the attic before it expends itself. If I put it on the floor I shall tread on it. If I try to balance it on one arm while I whip the trousers away from under it I run the risk of knocking the secateurs on to the floor, and who can say, if that happens, how

many times I shall look for them with anger and despair in the garage and the wood-shed and under the telephone-table in the hall?

There is a further difficulty. It is no use taking trousers off desks unless one is going to put them away properly. They should be hung on hangers, not thrown carelessly on a heap of old *Geographical Magazines*. Now I am willing to bet, without wasting time and energy in going to look, that not a single hanger in my clothes cupboard is unemployed. Or, rather, those that are vacant will be of the kind that take coats only, while those that have cross-pieces will in every case be supporting coats and trousers of different suits. I know for a fact that my tails embrace a pair of white flannel trousers—a useless combination, except possibly for the Procession of Boats at Eton (whose annual fees, I notice, compare unfavourably with those of Otago School, Dunedin)—and it would not surprise me to find other liaisons no less repugnant to men of taste and refinement. One of these days, given the spark to set my enthusiasm alight, I shall reorganize the whole cupboard, no matter how much sorting out and brushing and careful alignment of creases it is going to cost me. Such a spark might well be provided by an attempt to put my grey flannel trousers away. It is better, on all counts, to leave them where they are.

I am confirmed in this view by some further observations of Mr. Morrison's. He knows that in the old carefree days of privilege I should have solved the whole problem by buying, or causing to be bought, a brand-new hanger for my trousers, at the same time disposing of my typewriter by summoning some menial to take it away on a tray. And he knows that to-day I can do neither the one nor the other: I can only sit here trying to work out a solution by the use of my own brains and brawn and initiative. That is what he means when he says "there are some sections of the community which are being pretty severely tested at this moment." At least I think that is what he means. He can hardly have me in mind when he asks us "to point the finger of public scorn at parasites who make themselves comfortable at the expense of the whole community." I am simply making myself uncomfortable at my own expense.

H. F. E.

Disinherited

Memories of Mayfair A.R.P.

ONCE I owned these known streets; they were mine because I stayed—

Under the bombs' fall, in the harsh watches of the night.

Never mind if some of us, secretly, were afraid;

We stood here to protect, in spite of all: Ours the right.

Deserted and dusty, these streets; glassless and battered.

The flock of fashion flown, houses abandoned and left.

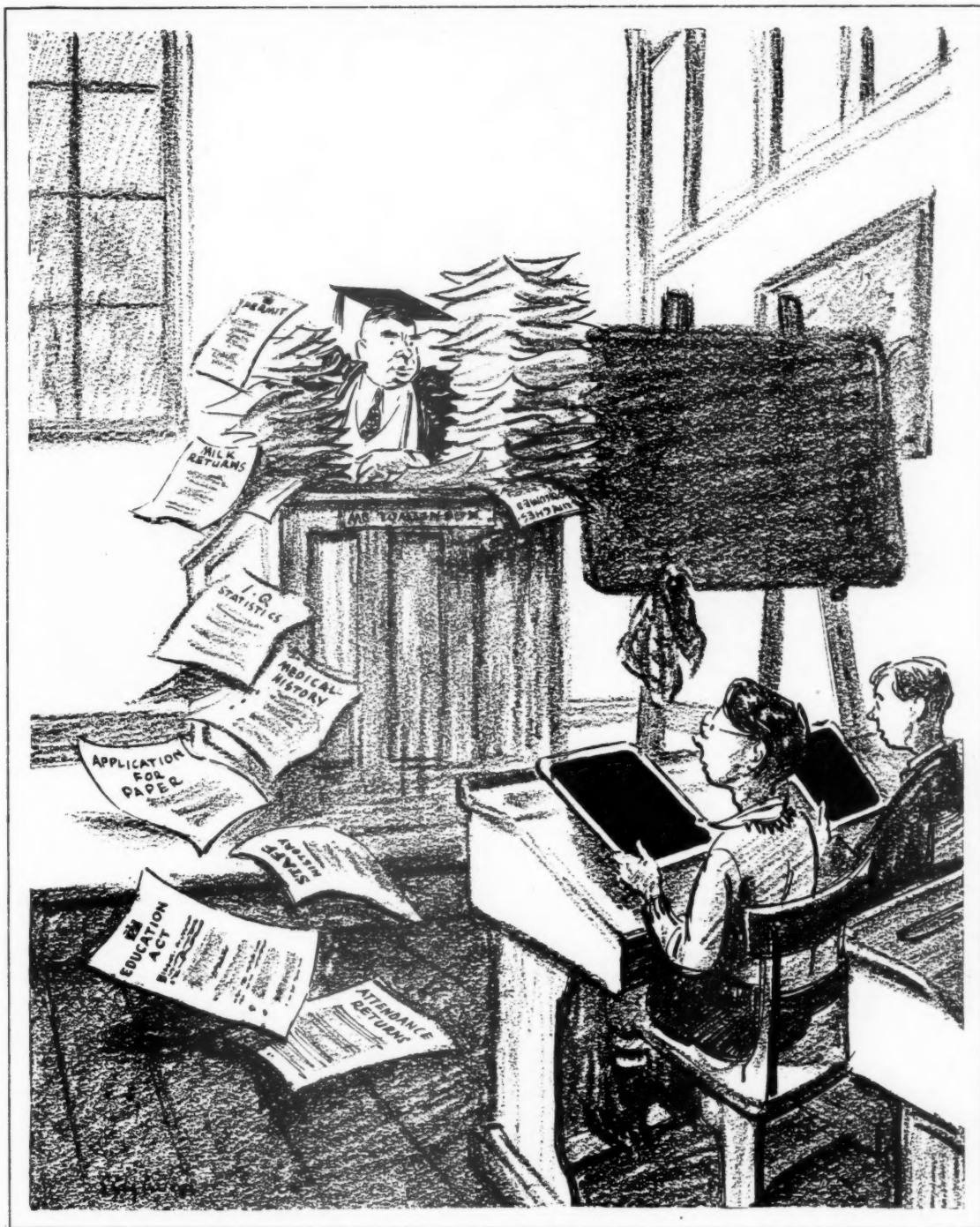
What had been fine homes blown to the four winds and scattered;

But we tended survivors; saved them from fire and theft.

Now, in *The Times*, I see names of rovers returning.

Storm's over and danger done: They are installed again, To take up the life they fled when London was burning—

Truant strangers in streets that we saved; redeemed in vain?



FIRST THINGS FIRST

"As we have no paper it will be slates again this morning, boys."

[The National Association of Teachers report an acute shortage of paper and text books in schools.]



"Now, what shall we call the potato-soup to-day?"

Further Remarks

IT being the time of year it is, I think I shall deal to-day with some aspects of garden life, beginning with some notes on the cuckoo. By this stage of the summer the cuckoo has got well dug in and is being taken for granted by even the people to whom the squeak of an upturned bicycle is the door-bell and the door-bell the telephone. That the cuckoo subsides all of a sudden from an event to a jag in Nature's backdrop is no reflection on this accommodating bird. It cannot help saying "Cuckoo" and it cannot help keeping on saying it; for though, as far as we know, it does sometimes sit quietly, getting its breath back or trying to remember where it has laid its eggs this year, when a cuckoo is not saying "Cuckoo" it does not, for ordinary people, exist; so that to the public the cuckoo is as near a non-stop process as anything else that never stops. Other birds probably never stop either, but the cuckoo is, as it were, the triangle in the orchestra. As for the funny way the public expects its cuckoos a little earlier each year, sociologists can offer no explanation beyond hinting that it has something to do with newspapers, the growth of education, putting the clocks on and wireless all mixed together into a haze of progress.

I must say a word about cuckoos in literature—just that the only cuckoo-poem that springs to the average mind is

part of a poem by Wordsworth. The same thing happens with Tintern Abbey and lesser celandines (with celandines the only part of the poem that actually springs is the title), and I am really only mentioning it to illustrate the unifying effect of Wordsworth on average minds. I must also say a word about cuckoos in cuckoo-clocks. Zoologists are not surprised at the choice of this particular creature for the job. They say that no other could pop out and strike twelve without appearing overworked for the occasion.

NOW I come to something which can only happen to people with tennis courts, and not very often even to them, but which in its mild way is a dreadful calamity. I refer of course to when one of the tennis-net posts goes. When a post goes, which it usually does by leaning in when you wind the net up so that further winding has no effect except on the post, the whole foundation of the game is shaken as few other mischances can shake it. People can play tennis in such a bad light or with such faint lines that they will take each other's word for the score, but when once the net goes down in the middle they are sunk. They are down to the level of the 'nineties; they might as well wait for the ball to bounce twice before they hit it.

Most tennis players think they would play very much

better if they were allowed to wait for the ball to bounce twice, but that is beside the point. Most of them, too, have always wanted the net to sag in the middle, but that makes no difference either. They must join in the general exclamations of dismay and drop their rackets (by which I mean put them carefully in a deck-chair) and take their place in the anxious group by the net.

The fact that anyone visualizing this scene will be thinking of broken flower-pots rather proves what I am going to say next—that the only step you can take with an uprooted tennis net, at the time, is to pack it round with broken flower-pots, stones, bits of hoe-handles and other queer objects that come pouring into headquarters. It is possible to pack enough stuff round a post to be able to yank the net up again and watch unhappily for the outcome; but the natural law about an uprooted tennis-net post is that when once it has tasted freedom there is nothing for it but to dig it a new hole, a process which calls for much helpful watching and which, like anything else people get keen on in gardens, can make them very late for meals.

I DON'T think I can say anything about being late for meals that the people at the meal end do not know, but I should like to remind both sides how sharp a mental contrast they afford for the first few minutes of the meal they are late for. The meal-getters find themselves automatically rendered stupid, with a total lack of interest in the non-food levels of life; interrupting the conversation with brisk statements like "Mashed as well" and "You like outside," things that no one can say and feel clever about. The people who have come in late are more than just late; they represent the big idle world outside the kitchen and will be typical if they never notice the mint-sauce. Psychologists like particularly the people who, after striving to keep the spinach hot, feel quite annoyed when the others say they don't mind it being cold.

The only other thing I want to say about meals in this connection is that people about to escape into the garden afterwards cherish the belief that if they get away quick enough some unseen benefactor will do the washing up; and, at the trifling cost of having to make a fuss of someone afterwards, they are right.

Now I want to make some remarks about croquet hoops and other adjuncts of this whimsical game. The best way to bang a croquet hoop into a lawn is with a non-croquet mallet, but the sight of a croquet-mallet carries many people away, so that there are few players who have not come up against the rule that to bang with a long-handled instrument is to be conscious of something very heavy happening a yard away. Some croquet boxes boast two or three of the four little coloured clips which, as far as the players know, they stick on the hoop they have got through; but as the point about croquet is that no one knows anything for certain you sometimes find them clipped to the mallets, or the players, or the players' friends. Besides the hoops there are two cricket stumps, one of which is the winning post; but it is not possible to tell which until the players have sorted out which way they went round last time, which is always years ago.

MENTION of croquet reminding the average person of lemonade, I think it would be nice to end with some remarks on the lemon. The lemon is closely allied with, and at the same time the opposite of, the orange. It is yellow, but not, when you come to think of it, lemon-yellow; it is more the colour of scrambled eggs or yellow paint. It has a sort of point each end and the thickest skin known to the fruit world. The fact that every now

and then people hear that other people's greengrocers have got lemons has put the lemon back a little nearer its old status, whatever that was. We cannot be quite sure after so long, but we may take it that in the old days people owning a lemon did not, as they did a year or two ago, form a committee to agree on its destiny. Nowadays the lemon is still revered to the extent of two lemons in a bowl ranking as a more classy table decoration than a bunch of forget-me-nots gone thin at the bottom, but people offered lemon with their fish are not nearly so thunderstruck as they once were, and it is not an uncommon sight to see some rather casual member of the household at work on a half-lemon and a squeezer just for a glass of lemonade.

To end up I should like to make two remarks on lemonade; the first that people who put the sugar in last find it waiting for them at the bottom, and the second that no one knows the difference between lemonade and lemon squash beyond having a vague idea that lemonade began being called lemon squash within living memory, and that it was so called because put that way it sounds classier, by which I mean more likely to have bits in it.

Some Reflections on Acrobats

HOW brightly he shines in the flares of magnesium, That daring young man on the flying trapezium! I cannot find wordage of adequate praisium For such a fine fellow in such a gymnasium. O let me fling bunches of luscious chrysanthemum, And let me have choirs to sing me this anthemum! Such leaping and swinging high up in the domium Are worthy, dear friends, of the loudest encomium; I cannot see how he has broken no ribrium, And how he maintains such superb equilibrium.



"Sorry—we're only a three-piece orchestra, and Clair de Lune isn't one of them."



"... Treat to have the radio again—when it was off in the mornings and afternoons it fair got on your nerves, didn't it?"

Evocative

FROM the Atlantic shore to the Muscovite's protective fringe dull aridity afflicts the European scene. It is figured by the modern May Day—a planned and conscientious parade of the unduly earnest.

True, its once romantic castles, its haunted palaces, remain; its mountains and lakes still outdo the picture post-cards. Tourism re-established will display these—with something of bathos—at an inclusive charge. But the old nostalgic things—what the traveller really paid for—are fled.

Where is the Vicomte with *narquois* smile, where the fervid Marchese; and their daunting women-folk? The adventuress still wields her compelling beauty but she has lost her old bravura. She is no longer a white Russian princess; and her best effort is to introduce a man who will cash your cheque outside the sterling area.

The more barbaric figures have passed beyond conjuration. Gone is the Hungarian count whose estates were so vast, his descent so long; his purse and memory so short. He doesn't even, in pathetic eclipse, drive a taxi-cab. The Balkan prince bates his fire and expresses the will of the proletariat—or somebody wants to know the reason why. Ruritania shares limbo

with Seaboard Bohemia; and the Almanach de Gotha yields place to a huddle of party leaders—transient and notably embarrassed.

But human nature won't stand this indefinitely. It craves its darling follies and—like fireweed on a bombed site—they'll find the light. The picturesque approaches and splendour will yet emerge.

Loaded with orders (some of them with remittance enclosed) the President of the International Co-operative will grace his box at the opera. He will cast all at the feet of the dancer who nightly maddens her devotees at the Volks Kultur-Palast. And if he quaffs champagne from her slippers it's to be hoped the soles stay on.

More resonant chords will be struck. The contemporary Montagues and Capulets—fatally divided on the profit-motive issue—may again break youthful hearts. The haughty follower of De Gaulle will spurn the suit of the humble Christian Syndicalist. An easement of the passport situation holds promise of elopements. With a comprehensive visa and a sten gun the irate parent will do his stuff.

Dark villainy itself will respond. Can we not see the currency-shark feeling the impulse and extending his

scope? The odds are he will foreclose on the old estate and ultimately get his—probably from a shop-steward with hair like ripened corn.

Guitars will be re-strung; and lovely welfare workers stoop to folly. The fair factory inspector will think the world of smoke abatement and industrial residues well lost for love. But I doubt if a serenade by Bartok will do the trick.

A beginning has been made. The Romantic Spirit—with some assistance from the Comic—has revived the continental duel. Admittedly, they've got off to an indifferent start. The encounters of journalists and legislators lack something of the old magic. Here is no aspersion on a reputation white as the driven snow, no insult to an exiled king; not even hot words over the cards, while the candles pale in the coming day. Still, somebody has spoken too lightly of a politician's name—and that takes a bit of doing.

Admittedly, some of the best features are missing. Yet still—in stiff-lipped pallor—the parties to the affair rise at dawn. No delicate Mechlin shows at throat and wrist. There lacks the high stock and cloak of the latter periods. They probably wear sports-shirts and sneakers. They

reach the field, regrettably, by taxi. But the rest of the delightful formula is observed.

The early light strikes across the clearing. Cold salutes are exchanged. Swords are measured, or the distance silently paced out. (A marking tape would fall below the high occasion.) The surgeon—with a poor regard for asepsis—fingers his instruments. To some he seems an otiose figure; but accidents can happen.

The last attempt at reconciliation is made and scorned. The contestants face each other and the word is given. And after that, to the cold Anglo-Saxon, something of anti-climax ensues.

But not to the warmer Latin. The swords, but lightly fleshed, are driven up. The bullet strikes an adjacent tree; or some creature whose luck is out. The heroic moment passes; but what a manly fervour succeeds! Honour is

satisfied, the adversaries embrace, the seconds give the "shake hands"—the taxi-men feel assured of their fares. A glow, as of a job well done or a dentist evaded, suffuses all. All, that is, except the surgeon. He, as ever, goes back with the can.

Yes, it's a stimulating occasion, evocative of chevalresque tradition and lightly salted with the lethal. And, after all, it isn't all fun. They still have to face the 1947 coffee.

Invitation to the Muse

AWAY, good Muse, away!
We shall not sing to-day.
Do not inspire us:
We're not desirous
Of lute or lay.
Yes, there are themes, we know,
That might have earned a song.
England, by all the rules of evidence,
Of economics and of common-sense,
Can't last for long,
And yet is able
To wear the label
"Still Going Strong"—
A noble topic but it rings no gong.
Affairs at Margate
Might be our targate:
Or we could hymn the Brotherhood of
Emman
Who's always buttering
With genial uttering
The toast of everybody if he can.
Or, talking of genial,
You might expect
Some soft replies
To the cooing cries
Of *Izvestia* or Hecht.
But what? 'Tis true, the poets do not
sing
For any base material thing.
Yet they are rare
Who live on air
As many think we do.
Though hot the fire
Behind the lyre
We need a crust or two.
And in the olden day,
Though never stooping,
Like other toilers,
To mere pot-boilers,
We kept the wolf away.
But now the State's a partner in our
trade
And Dalton snatches what Apollon made.
So, Muse, forget about the pipes and
tabors:
In our sore need
To other labours
Let us proceed.
Far off at Pump-ton Park there is a
horse,

His name *Spring Breeze*—his father
Month of May,
His dam the celebrated *Golden Gorse*
Who won the King's Cup—so he
ought to stay—
A three-year-old, a little on the leg,
Yet he took *Prince of Darkness* down
a peg,
And in the Cambridge Cup,
Young Rivett up,
Scrutator beat him by, perhaps, a yard,
But then, as you know,
The going was slow
And he likes it hard.

That was, of course, a sprint, five
furlongs only.
To-day the distance is a mile and
three,
And there will be
Fine steeds (and riders)
More famous far than he.
This horse is now among the rank
outsiders—
100 to 1!
You're baffled, Muse? Well, I will tell
you all.
Suppose we've done
Ten pounds each way about this
animall,
And our dear horse
Completes the course
First of the field—
Muse, you old bore,
One thousand pounds and more
Will be the yield!
And of that sum not any,
Not one well-garnered penny,
Goes to the Nation:
No taxes—income—sur—entertain-
ment—or profit
Will the rapacious Exchequer skim
off it:
For this is a "capital appreciation."
And the great State,
So ruthless, bold and brisk
At sucking the gains
Of brains
Into the Fisc—
Poet and Doctor,
Publisher, Manager,

Captain of Industry—
Squeezing the juice
Of all who produce
Or take a brave risk—
The great State relaxes,
Refuses action
When it comes to taxes
On a betting transaction.
Were it not better done, as others wot,
To make a packet and retain the lot?
So, gentle Muse, a fiver, if you please,
And I will put it on our dear *Spring
Breeze*.
Nor, by the way,
Need we devote the day
To travel and toil.
We simply sit
And telephone a bit
To Mr. Doyle.
Let the others queue at Waterloo
Or battle on the Down:
We'll sit alone and use the phone
Provided by the Crown.
Nor will we stop at that.
At eventide
The greyhounds run:
And, flushed with mon
And pride,
We'll sit and dine behind plate-glass
And watch the dashing doggies pass.
Here, true, some Entertainment tax
we'll pay,
Like the poor fools who go to see a play:
But we'll amass another "wad" or two
With which the Chancellor has naught
to do.
And why confine our forces
To common dogs and horses?
To-morrow, Muse, we'll plunge into the
Pools!
Fortunes await
The men who concentrate
On football form, and understand the
rules.
Here all we stake
And all we take
Is free of tax.
Hence, loathéd Poetry!
Sweet lute, relax.
Fond Muse, away!
We will not sing to-day! A. P. H.



"Well, there it is—now let's go and find a really good hotel."

Colonial Correspondence

DEAR DAVID AND DIANA,—As modest repayment for the delights of your last letter, here is a summer day which has just caused much excitement in England.

It came at the week-end. Even allowing for our contrivance with the clock to pinch the free light of early morning, by the false hour of 10 A.M. the sun was already warm: so after breakfast it was pleasant on the porch in a dressing-gown.

The sky was feathered round the rims with a few clouds, but none of them serious. The sea was flat and blue, with scarcely the strength to fall over on the sand and spread out a yard or so of that pretty silk stuff with white lace at the edge. Farther out, just an occasional wave would feel like jumping the half-submerged heads of the rocks, looking like a lazy white dolphin.

Around the cove the newly-painted beach huts stood in neat curving rows, as though some clever gardener had cashed in on the general advance of summer and grown them up alongside the peppered profusion of daisies, some of which uncurred on the lawn by the porch.

Behind the huts, inland from the sea, the white concrete café began positively to shimmer in the sun. Already the proprietor's car was parked at the rear entrance, the kitchen windows were open and inside was visible intense preparation. Already, too, in the park by the café, the vanguard of an army of cars had arrived and were shining glossily in the sun—from elbow-grease and pride of ownership rather than from any recent place on the production

belt. A deck-chair had staked a pitch on the sand, and a child in a red frock was building the first castle of the day.

Yes, my colonials, by now the sun was so hot on the tile floor of the porch that one almost looked for one of your prize lizards or pretty snakes. But it was nice for our English ants—nice for two of them who were scurrying round in circles as though equipped with roller-skates, returning every now and then to give a wallop to a third, who was the only one in sight not enjoying the morning, and who was shortly dragged off into the grass.

On the opposite slope of the cove, above the café, a figure appeared on the cricket-field, walked up and down the pitch, gazed out to sea and examined the sky with a needless pugnacity as though to chase off altogether the motionless wisps of cloud. And he was the reminder that the day had stern business ahead, and could no longer be met in a dressing-gown.

By four o'clock much had been crowded into the day. Time's wallet was stuffed with ice-cream, innumerable lunches, picnic meals delightfully gritty with sand, already scores of café teas, long warm hours in the depths of novels, minutes of intense excitement in the depths of rock pools where little fish with enormous heads performed obligingly for bent pins baited with limpets.

Mothers had lost uncountable children and experienced the relief of finding them again. Sleeping fathers had woken to the sensation of sand being poured on their stomachs, and the necessity of rising immediately to construct tunnels.

And, on the cricket-field, nearly two innings, with their palpitations of advantage to this side and that, their triumphs and disappointments generously reflected in the distorting mirror of the holiday crowd, had compressed themselves in the short space since twelve o'clock.

There was a hush on the cricket-field, then a roar as the ninth wicket fell instead of the ball going over square-leg into the sea. Two runs to win, one to draw. (Where was this day except in England? How much more peaceful for it had it gone to some lazy nook in the Mediterranean.)

Suddenly, despairingly, the hush was broken.

"We'm lost!" All eyes turned in panic to the solemn, red-faced youth. Having got the attention he wanted he repeated, "We'm lost! We'm only got Joe Hunter!" and the red face split in a grin and he was turned over backwards from the bench and Joe Hunter sallied out, with an air of agreeing entirely.

But no, for he faced the fast bowler and swung at him bravely and caught the ball on his knuckles and sent it away for one, which is what Joe Hunter will always do at a pinch. And the match was drawn, for the first ball of the next over went squarely into his wicket, and he ran back grinning all over his pleasant country face and was chaired and cheered and pummelled.

So the day quietened down, and trailed off across the sea in a gentle, colourful sunset which would seem pretty tame to you but which appeared all right to us, rationed as we are.

Yours ever, J.

P.S.—Don't forget to send back that magazine we can only subscribe to for export.

o o

"Lost, Black and Tan Dog, long haired; answers name of 'Teddy.'—Please return Shoulder of Mutton. Reward."

Advt. in Salisbury paper.

Is that P.S. addressed to the dog?

Aunt Tabitha Up Against It.

MY Aunt Tabitha chose a moment when the country was labouring in the trough, or up against the wall, or staggering beneath the shock, of an economic crisis—I mean *Now*, in case you haven't noticed this little news item—to declare that she had decided to adopt a new way of making money.

"I am becoming responsible," she said carefully, "for a new comic strip, or strip cartoon. Yes," she growled in the direction of her thin uncle, who was as usual about to interrupt, "I use the words in their exact sense, as meaning a series of drawings which are neither cartoons nor intentionally comic. But my problem is rather like that of the housewife."

"Anyone we know?" asked her fat uncle vivaciously, straightening his tie.

"First I have to choose the name of my principal character," said Aunt Tabitha, taking no notice. "The surname will of course be something sturdy and British like Smith, but the first half? Chuck, Spike, Nick, Crack, Buck, Click, Brock, Smack, Brick, Jake, Slick, Blake——"

"Tum tiddle um tum," one of her great-grandfathers interrupted, raising his eyebrows and pointing at another, who looked round apologetically before saying "Pom—ahem—pom."

Aunt Tabitha waved a hand in a gesture of infinite weariness (this was a coincidence, for she was merely removing a cobweb from her guitar, or whatever that thing is).

"My problem," she repeated, "is rather like that of the housewife. A matter of choice. Which of these names shall I choose?"

"You forgot SMIKE, Hick, Duck and Cluck," said her thin uncle sardonically, to which she replied "They have unfortunate associations."

"So has the housewife," riposted her thin uncle (sucking up to Mr. Shinwell).

"Never mind, never mind, let the girl alone," said Aunt Tabitha's eldest great-grandfather. "Assuming she has her principal character—and I need hardly add that she can keep him—what then?"

"Her problem is rather like that of the housewife," her fat uncle said weightily. One of the cousins said "What, again?"

"Of course. There is hardly a single problem to-day," another of her great-grandfathers pointed out, "that is not compared at every opportunity with that of the housewife. It is a last despairing effort to get the housewife to take any interest whatever——"

"Careful, boy, careful," interrupted Aunt Tabitha's thin uncle, looking round apprehensively at the female members of the party, most of whom were rolling up their sleeves. "Hell hath no fury——"

"Hath?" said the old gentleman. "What do you mean, hath?"

"It's a quotation."

"From the days before efficient dentistry," said Aunt Tabitha's great-great-Aunt Maud. "Do you realize that when Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt wished to have a tooth drawn, they had to go to the barber? La! those were the days before even the chymist——"

"Had he got any saccharin?" Aunt Tabitha's grandmother eagerly inquired, half-rising from her chair.

Refusing to be tempted down this promising but congested by-path, Aunt Tabitha resumed: "And then there are the other necessary characters. My hero must have a girl; he must have an assistant, or stooge; he must have an implacable enemy; and in the background there must

be various supernumeraries kicking about. I think of including the Four Just Men."

"The Four Just Men!" her fat uncle repeated. "Who are the Four Just Men?"

"Oh," said Aunt Tabitha, modestly, "they're just men. And if you ask me what they are to kick about, I reply that I would give them a tin of something, if only I had any points."

She looked hard at her fat uncle, who put his hand defensively over the pocket in which he keeps his ration-book and then observed with affected indifference "Your problem seems remarkably like that of the housewife."

"Are you suggesting that I myself am not a housewife?" said Aunt Tabitha, indignantly. "I, whose inimitable toast and marmalade was known—when I could get the bread, when I could get the marmalade, before the toasting-fork began to be used in the garden, and in the intervals between electricity cuts—from Land's End to as near John o' Groats as the current railway strike would allow?"

"Or fifty thousand Cornish men shall know the Ross-on-Wye!" cried Aunt Tabitha's eldest great-grandfather, with dubious relevance.

"What! in the present shortage of man-power," her thin uncle said indignantly, "we find fifty thousand Cornishmen sight-seeing in Herefordshire! Why aren't they in essential industry? Why aren't they down the mines?"

"Up the mines!" corrected a member of the family who had not hitherto spoken, waving a little flag with "N.C.B." on it. "Up the mines!"

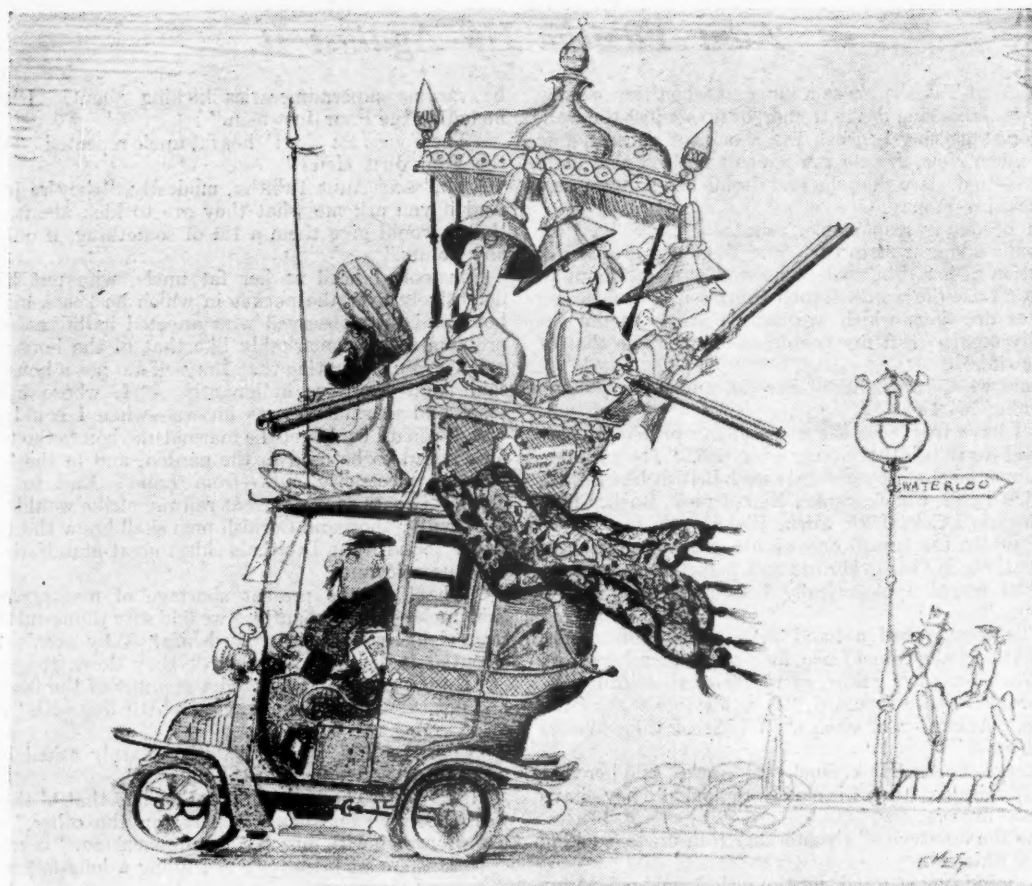
"Come to that," Aunt Tabitha sharply asked her thin uncle, "why aren't *you* in the mines?"

He replied "The problem is rather like that of the housewife. On the one hand is hers; on the other," and he looked round with justifiable apprehension, "is mines."

Here there was dead silence, filling a long-felt want.

R. M.





"There'll be quite a few coming back now, I suppose."

Lights Out

WHAT is this thundering on the front door?

It is unlike the gentle knocking of our many kind friends who call after dinner at night with minute scraps for our unworthy hens.

It is indeed the noise of an angry air-raid warden.

Is there a chink in the curtains?

But no, of course—there are no air-raid wardens and chinks are no longer an offence.

What then can it be?

I open the front door.

Once more I am reminded of an angry air-raid warden. For it is a man in whose eyes burns the just flame of righteous indignation.

"I have a good mind," he says, "to go straight to the police."

"Criminal waste of fuel," he says, pointing to a small light which is switched on outside our front door.

"But that," I say, "is a very feeble light. It uses no power at all. I know nothing," I tell him, "of amps and watts and volts, but I do know that this is such a feeble light that it can hardly be considered a light at all."

"Why," he asks, "do you keep it on in that case?"

That is a sensible question and I should be able to answer it, but I cannot. It is, I remember, my wife's doing. And she being, in the matter of electricity, a merciless woman—has she not forbidden me to use any longer the electric fire in my dressing-room?—there must be some very good reason. But what the reason is, I cannot remember.

"Come on now," he says angrily, "are you going to turn it off, or are you not going to turn it off?"

He is a strong-looking man and

angry, and I admit that I am no hero.

"If you don't," he says, "I shall go straight to the police and report it." So I turn it off.

Click. The light is out.

I shut the door.

I wish that I could remember why my wife is so insistent that the light should be kept on. . .

But what is this?

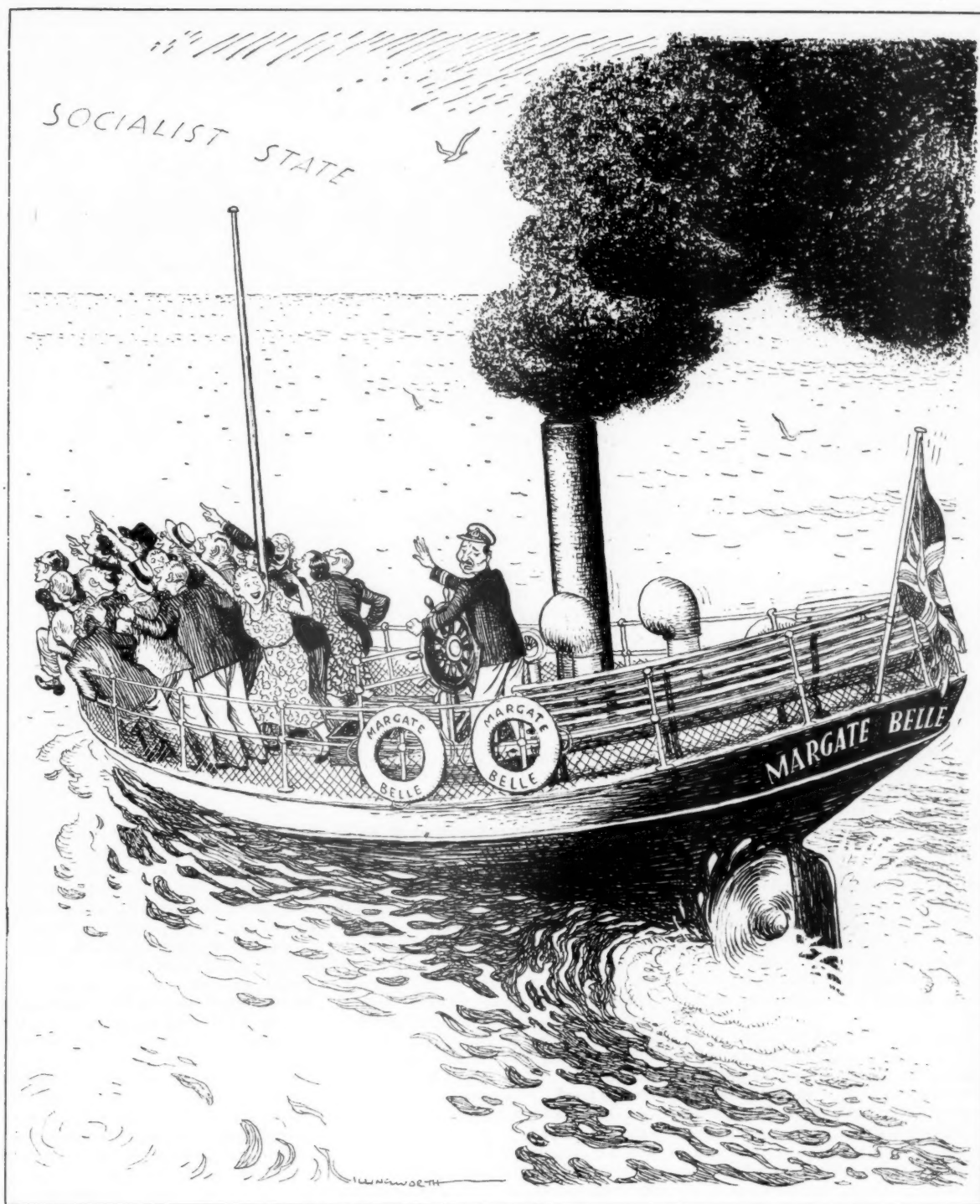
It is a terrible sound.

It comes from outside the front door.

It is the sound of a man falling unexpectedly down many steps in the dark and hurting himself grievously in the process. It is the sound of a man in great anger and considerable pain.

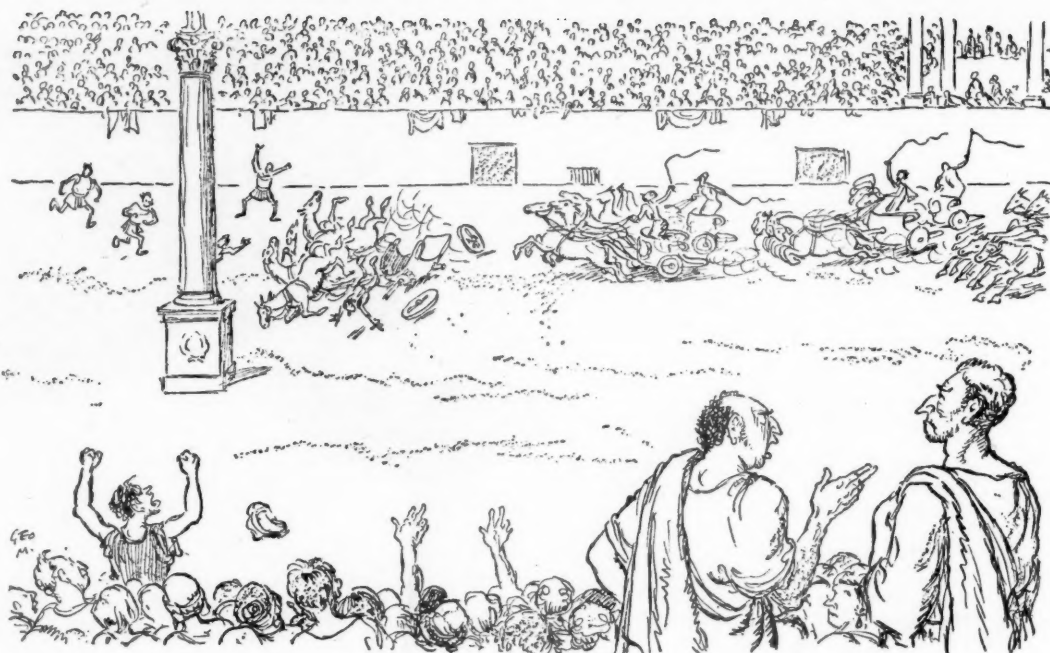
And then, suddenly, I remember.

Yes, of course—they *are* very tricky steps in the dark.



FASTER, FASTER!

"Give the engine-room a chance, comrades."



"There goes my last toga!"

Report on the Behaviour in Combustion of Certain Herbs

"YOU'RE quite sure the bus isn't on fire?" demanded an old gentleman, anxiously.

"Not that I'm aware of," said the conductress, diving in her sporran for a halfpenny.

"Someone's got a bit of fish that's turning," declared a lady with a wrinkled nose.

"Smells to me like the brake-linings," put in a man in blue overalls.

"Set your minds at rest," I said. "It's nothing but burdock, holy thistle, mugwort, and pellitory of the wall . . ."

When my Aunt Loosestrife went away to live in Kalgoorlie she very kindly presented us with her extensive collection of herbs. She would have required a private yacht to shift it. Where others laid their hands on moths or postage-stamps my aunt amassed simples, and she would often break off in the middle of one of her conversations about Consols to exclaim "A nasty dull ache in my nose, bugle-weed will soon put paid to that!" and rush off to heat kettles and settle down to a session of brewing and

sipping which sometimes went on for the rest of the day. She was a very strong woman. We found ourselves in possession of several hundred large glass jars, and we had a shelf built right round the kitchen for the ones with the more respectable names. Very nice they look. It is difficult to employ them on any very definite plan, but when the cod looks more militant than usual we reach up for the nearest jar and explode a handful of whatever it contains in the target area. The results are nearly always surprising and our table has justly acquired a name for daring and resource.

Considering the number of things that can be pushed into a pipe I have always felt that to smoke only tobacco in it is probably as merely sheepish as eating marmalade for breakfast and not for tea. It seems to me the chances are that if Raleigh had come to rest on a railway embankment instead of on America there would now be a shattering impost on coltsfoot and kind-hearted folk would be writing to *The Times* in favour of a little-known weed called tobacco. Almost before

Mr. Dalton had sat down, therefore, I was out in the kitchen examining Aunt Loosestrife's relics with a new interest. A man I once got stuck in a lift with had spoken up warmly, I remembered, for coltsfoot as an aid to arson, so I threw some into a pudding-basin, adding soapwort and shepherd's purse and ladies' mantle and other exotics out of the dustier jars. My deepest pipe was soon filled and a new chapter in my life began. The volume of smoke was entirely satisfactory. It belled out of the window in enormous rolling clouds that clung darkly to the landscape. If you have ever listened to a heath fire in August you will know how that first pipe sounded. It didn't last more than ten minutes, but nor did I. I had to lie down for half an hour because blurred stills of forgotten pieces of my past kept appearing and a distant band was warming up its brasses in my ears. I blamed the ladies' mantle.

When life renewed itself I found Mr. Christmas at the door, sniffing. He had come about the form for the application for the triptych for the

licence for the new tile for the roof. He carries a big, empty pipe and before he had grasped what was happening it was fairly roaring with a fragrant blend of horsetail, scurvy grass, wormwood and fumitory. The last-named seemed almost to suggest itself. I explained what we were up to and he sat down looking sternly objective and shortly afterwards disappeared in smoke. This time for my own bowl I took four sturdy partners, squaw-vine, fleabane, bugloss and bog-bean. The mixture proved highly inflammable and to say it lacked bouquet would have been a downright lie. There was a good deal of body to it, too, and the flavour reminded me strongly of a specific I had much enjoyed with whooping-cough. Mr. Christmas and I between us produced such a column of smoke that interest began to be excited in the lane below. I went out and extended an invitation to any pipe-smokers present, and we were joined by Mr. Barrow, the hedger and ditcher, who was allotted blue mallow, wild carrot, cudweed and germander, and by an anonymous tramp who got rather landed with woundwort, rue, scullcap and sarsaparilla. It was a jovial gathering, not that we could see much of each other, and I even made a brief speech about the evil effects of nicotine and about the special sanctity the world has always accorded the selfless pioneer. . . . Although the tramp employed a word in relation to a straight blend of mousear and feverfew which had never before come my sheltered way, there was in the main no question of the success of the new fuel. It stimulated Mr. Christmas to a steady repertory of the more muscular hymn-tunes, which throbbed through the fog of the kitchen like some revivalist warning to mariners. . . . I myself dreamed a dream in which I foul-hooked a rhinoceros with a OGO dry-fly and landed it with the greatest of ease in the tramp's hat. . . . When the clouds momentarily rolled aside I caught dim glimpses of rapt faces in which De Quincey would have been the first to note a certain damp ecstasy. And on the whole it was probably the best thing that could have happened when Mr. Barrow went on fire. . . .

"How do you find it smokes?" asked the conductress, handing me the halfpenny.

"Nothing will stop it," I told her.

"I dare say it takes a bit of getting used to?" murmured the old gentleman doubtfully.

"Just a bit," I said, removing a flaming sprig of mugwort from his hat.

ERIC.

Notice to Drivers

OUR trolleybuses are so badly in need of repair that the transport committee appeal for your co-operation. This applies particularly to Puffin Hill on the downward journey. At one time a go-fast policy may have been justified, to force the committee's hands in replacements they were reluctant to begin till the very end, but now that things are short this is easier said than the vehicle is done. Loose lamp-holders are an example. These have got so bad they shed their bulb load on passengers' heads at every turn. As for the overhead contacts, everything has happened to these that a driver could think of, from swinging round over the causeway and putting a window-cleaner in hospital with his ladder bearing the brunt of the impetus, to trailing the whole overhead wire

network into the depot and barricading the repair staff in for a fortnight.

Since mid-week sports went off with our conductresses, a new sport seems to have returned with our rear-platform males. This seems to be known as "bump the clippy," in which the driver gives the vehicle a severe lurch at every opportunity to test the conductor's sense of balance. It is not the driver who gets the worst of it, but the public relations officer who uses every apology short of compensation to people who feel they have been sat on. It seems a bit suspicious how many were holding bags of eggs at the time, but if drivers are not going to use more care it means that all the stuff coming into the Lost Property Office for disposal to the staff is damaged beyond identification.

J. TINGLE, Traffic Receiver.



"This place has absolutely gone to pieces—last summer you could always get a table."



"That was Ronnie on the phone, mother. He wants to take me out to dinner and a cigarette."

New Methods in Scientific Transport

MOST impressive advances have been made in the field of scientific transport of late years. Much work has been done with circuit theory. Starting from the old molecular or billiard-ball assumption which insisted that there were two separate and different forms of circuit—i.e., the continuous or circular route, and the terminated or terminus-to-terminus route, Wilson of Cambridge successfully evolved a form of calculus which could with equal ease be applied to both. He called his new unit a Standard Circuit. A Standard Circuit is defined as the movement of one vehicle from its place of rest at any speed which the driver may deem appropriate out to any point or series of points which may be scheduled and back again to its place of rest. Further research has led to the conclusion that even this is not good enough, and Higgins of Manchester has gone so far as to claim that the unit should merely be a vehicle in its place of rest. His proof that the sensation of movement is an illusion caused by a faulty differential in Wilson's calculus is not, however, entirely satisfactory.

It is now known that real schedule efficiency can only be obtained if all the Standard Circuits are completed before the end of each working day. The efficiency of the schedule will be the ratio between the actual circuits completed and the number scheduled, full efficiency being attained when the ratio is unity. A series of delicate experiments by Annarsley in London and Wexton in Birmingham led to the

setting up of training schools whereby drivers were enabled to drive nose to tail in the middle of the road and so complete the S.C.s required. The half-road separation was found sufficient to guard against all but the most persistent interference.

An even more promising development, although not yet widely applied, has sprung from Bellerton's realization that a general increase in schedule efficiency would lead to the need for better screening against interference. He has now propounded four main methods of screening—Bulk Screening, Concealed Number Screening, False Number Screening and Impact Screening. Bulk Screening is so far the most popular method and consists of so arranging the position of the vehicle that there is another vehicle, preferably one of great weight and length, between it and the pavement at all interference points. Impact Screening is the next in popularity and has been analysed into three basic conductor-actions—the Thrust, the Kick and the Gouge. Concealed Number Screening, as the name implies, merely acts as a baffle but is nevertheless useful when the number roll can be turned to a position where two half-numbers are shown. False Number Screening is interesting. A long series of observations demonstrated that there was a tendency for the interference to attack one-route rather than another and that the determining factor lay in the actual number used and not the route covered. Twiskin tried the daring experiment of running a vehicle over its

correct route but with a false number. Active and prolonged interference was immediately reduced to complete apathy and listlessness and the route was operated with a very high standard of efficiency indeed.

Before leaving the subject of interference I would like to pay my tribute to the skill and devotion of the drivers who, lacking modern facilities, have nevertheless maintained schedule efficiency by a determined and relentless use of the old Mortuary Swerve which we all know so well. Another very interesting extension of circuit theory has been worked out by Swillerts. Using the Lorentz continuum calculus to attack Higgins's Theory of Rest he has shown that if Wilson's differential is faulty then the *whole* of an S.C. may properly be considered a place of rest. A working schedule would then consist of an ordinary route with the requisite number of immobile vehicles situate at approximately equal distances from each other throughout its length. This revolutionary suggestion has been given severe practical tests by the L.P.T.B. over a period of many months, and whatever the merits of Wilson's differential it cannot be denied that Swillerts' Equations yield magnificent results. Indeed, an ingenious placing of the vehicles at stations mid-way between interference points led to the unprecedented figure of 100 per cent. schedule efficiency for the first few days. Unfortunately, as the position stabilized a tendency was noticed for the interference to drift to one side or the other, sometimes leading to muddled attempts to set the vehicles in motion and thus utterly disrupt the system. The L.P.T.B. is constructing a set of heavy iron grilles or palisades which should prevent this, but until the output from the factory can be guaranteed they are maintaining schedule efficiency by removing the engines.

MECHANICAL

Mechanical advances have been mainly in the tramway and trolleybus field. Following the example of Lord Rayleigh, British Tram Physicists have been quick to apply later developments of Maxwell's Equations to their own subject. The British Tramways Standards Institute states that it is desirable to have a minimum of four bumps per single revolution of the main driving axle if sufficient audible warning of approach is to be given. In the past this has been attained by the use of ordinary square wheels, but elementary electrical theory showed that better results could be obtained by the use of triangular wheels set out of phase. This gives six bumps per revolution, an increase in efficiency of 50 per cent. or 17 Standard Phons per bogie. Bogson of Birmingham recently published the details of some experiments in which he set the two sides out of phase as well as the individual wheels. He states that the sinusoidal swing or lurch thereby given to the entire body of the tram is extremely interesting and may well lead to important advances in passenger packing.

The Artificial Limb and Plate Glass Company, Inc., lent during the war their fine research laboratories to the British, Colonial and Liverpool Trolleybus Insurance Company for the purpose of studying braking problems in L.P.T.B. trolleybuses. Several excellent new types of brake have been designed as a result, including the Exponential-Reactive Brake now fitted throughout the London area. In this system the force with which the brake is applied increases exponentially according to the speed of the vehicle and is arranged to be substantially infinite at a speed of 30 m.p.h. The trolleybus then removes the road surface until it comes to a halt. One of the minor problems here was the need for some protection for the driver when the passengers were propelled against his normally flimsy partition, but the trouble was quickly

overcome by the provision of a special plate glass which splintered only on the passenger's side.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For much of the material in this short paper the writer is greatly indebted to Hoskin's *Manual of Public Transport* and Gambo's delightful little book *Wind Through the Window*. Mention must also be made of Klankin's papers on "Efficiency Swerves," and "Places of Rest in London."

Himself to Herself

(The fee for marriage at a register office has been raised.)

WHEN as chance occurred I've asked to wed you,
Pretty often too, as you'll admit,
And with equal frequency you said you
Thought you'd wait a bit,

That was at a halcyon time when loving
Swains who let their young affections loose,
Even to the vital point of shoving
Necks into the noose,

Did so expeditiously and cheaply.
Now, with lamentable want of tact,
Someone's put the fee up, pretty steeply;
Trebled it in fact.

Of a sudden, mind you, in a twinkling,
And, with prices rising everywhere,
Though no pessimist, I feel an inkling
That it won't stop there.

Plainly this is not the time to dally.
Now they've started monkeying with their fees
Let's have no more shilly, no more shally;
Make your mind up, please.

Meet me, then, on Monday at eleven,
When I'll brave the matrimonial rope
Which will swing me to the highest heaven.
So at least I hope. DUM-DUM.



"Morning, Mabel."

"HEAR the ghosts that wake applauding in the Files!" For applause read dissent. Ghosts at the St. James's on the first night of Mr. CLIVE BROOK's revival would have been peevish. Had they not said nineteen years ago, and said plainly, that FERENC MOLNAR's comedy would not do? Yet here it was again, back at the same theatre. Time, we feel, has proved those ghosts to be wrong. The play is the airiest of frivols, a coloured bubble in the sun, but it floats along without bursting and its progress is always pleasant to watch. Indeed, this revival may at last register a success for MOLNAR in the

At the Play

THE PLAY'S THE THING (ST. JAMES'S)—
TWELFTH NIGHT (OPEN AIR)—KING LEAR (EMBASSY)



(The Play's the Thing.)

TRUTH MASQUERADES AS FICTION.

<i>Almady</i>	MR. MICHAEL SHEPLEY
<i>Ilona Szabo</i>	MISS IRENE WORTH
<i>Sandor Turai</i>	MR. CLIVE BROOK
<i>Mansky</i>	MR. PAUL DEMEL

West End that has rejected him so resolutely.

The plot is a fantastic anecdote, its setting some castle of the Italian Riviera where skies and sea are cobalt and the sun is white fire. A pair of dramatists and a young composer have arrived to discuss their work. Unhappily, the walls of the new wing are as thin as tissue. When *Albert*, the composer, overhears his adored *Ilona*—who is to be the play's star—in a sultry love-scene with a middle-aged actor, all seems to have crumbled:

young love and professional ambition alike. "O wicked wall through whom I hear no bliss!" as another writer almost said. But *Sandor Turai*, First Dramatist, has his own ideas. He sits out the night, fortified by a magnum, writes a play incorporating the overheard passages, enjoys a vast breakfast, and at night brings *Albert* to hear the play in rehearsal. *Ilona* and her actor-friend, *Almady*, must go again through their wretched love-scene, woven now into an eccentric horticultural drama, tapestried with the most resounding and least pronounceable place-names in the French language. *Albert*, an intelligent lad, takes it at once. Ah, yes: then the previous night had been a rehearsal. All's well.

And so it is—not because of the plot, but because of a continuous shimmer of dialogue and the decoration in which MOLNAR delights. There is in the castle the most impeccable of footmen with the ringing name of *Johann Dwornitschek*. His manners are immaculate; his tongue is oiled silk: Mr. GEORGE DUNN, a cat-in-cream, purrs his way

through the piece with a relishing suavity. There is, too, a secretary-turned-prompter, a part in which Mr. CLAUD ALLISTER twitches and scampers like an eager rabbit. Miss IRENE WORTH, with her dark beauty, distils much from *Ilona's* not very grateful scenes; but the burden of the evening rests on Mr. BROOK's *Sandor* and on the *Almady* of Mr. MICHAEL SHEPLEY. It is a burden happily borne. Mr. BROOK, whose timing has a stop-watch precision, flicks off *Sandor's* lines with a swift and deceptive ease.

Mr. SHEPLEY is gorgeously baffle-headed as an actor who somehow contrives to turn any French name into a sound like the midnight shunting of a tank engine. This performance is an inventive bit of farce spatchcocked into a light comedy that for once, I think, deserves both the epithet and the noun.

Out at Regent's Park, *Twelfth Night* competes again with the babbling gossip of the air in the first production of Mr. ROBERT ATKINS's season. *Illyria* is usually a good place on the June turf, and this year Mr. ATKINS has found a pair of actresses of whom we shall hear more—Miss CHRISTINE POLLON (the *Viola*) and Miss PATRICIA KNEALE (*Olivia*). They are both fresh and young, and though inexperience still betrays them at times, the romantic scenes are never permitted to droop. We are less certain about the comedy. By now Miss MARY HONER could touch off *Maria* in her sleep. Mr. WILFRED FLETCHER's clockwork-doll *Aguicheek* is acceptable in its uncomplicated fashion. But what of *Malvolio*? We remember him of old at Regent's Park as both a kind of Cardinal in reduced circumstances, and as a high-fantastical Puritan. Contemplation should make a rare turkey-cock of the fellow, but Mr. KYNASTON REEVES has chosen a steady restraint and banned all extraneous business. It is a consistent performance, well-spoken, but a little dull, a little lacking in comic drive. Undoubtedly, in this *Illyria*, the romantics have it. Mr. PAUL HANSARD is a particularly good *Sebastian*, and even a plausible twin.

So at last to the Embassy and the latest wind on the heath. Mr. WILLIAM DEVLIN, thirteen years o'der than when he first startled London as *King Lear*, has now an added authority. *Lear* (and DEVLIN is one of the three best of our time) is, as he should be, larger than life-size: the actor can both ride the storm and take the heart. Bristol's Old Vic Company is in loyal support, directed by Mr. HUGH HUNT, who produced DEVLIN's first *Lear* at the Westminster. Mr. CLEMENT MCCALLIN thrusts boldly at *Edmund*, though his performance seems to be designed for a larger stage, and Mr. ROBERT SANSOM, a sound *Kent*, is a man of plain and uncoined constancy. But, next to *Lear*, Miss ROSALIE CRUTCHLEY's *Goneril* is the evening's peak: here is one of the most baleful sisters we remember, a hell-kite indeed, with poison in her eye, her hand, her tongue. J. C. T.

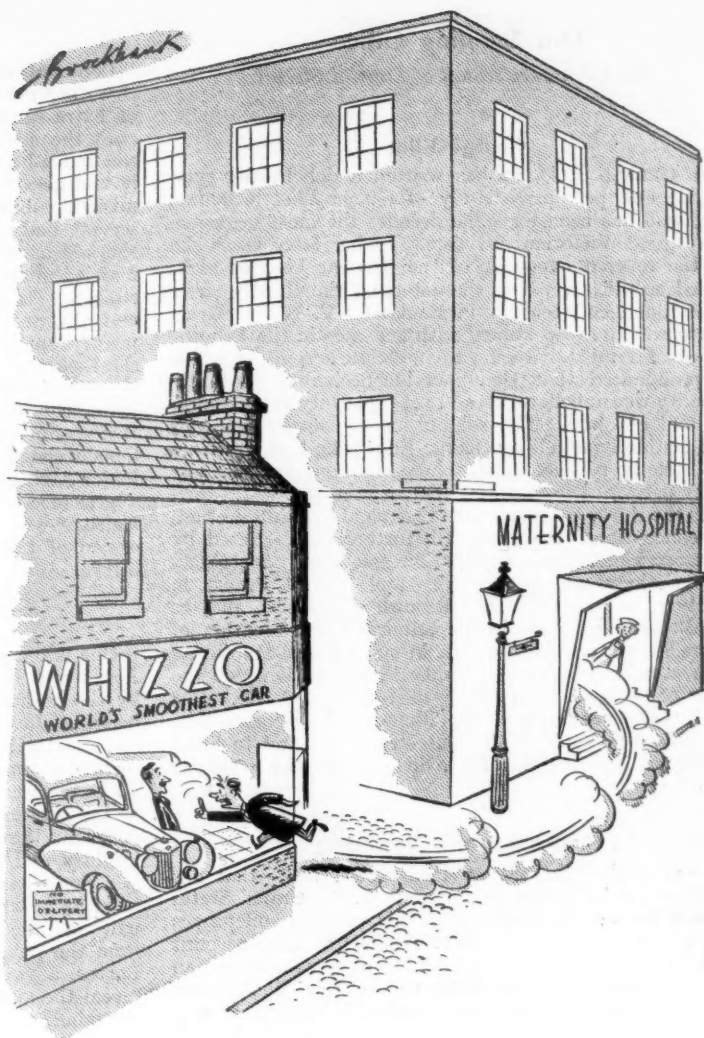
Pressing

I HAVE spent most of the last two days trying to press my political trousers, as Sympton wants me to sit in the front row on his platform this evening at an important meeting in support of his Parliamentary candidature. Our Party has not yet swung far enough to the Left for uncreased trousers to be allowed in the front row.

Unfortunately I have only one pair of political trousers, and the local shops sneer at mere orders for pressing, although willing to press them if I will let them be dry-cleaned. Even if I could afford such luxury, it would mean my retirement from political life until the job was done, and as the Day-and-a-Half-Cleaners require six weeks for the task and the While-You-Wait-Cleaners estimate two months the thing is obviously impossible.

I therefore decided to press the garments myself, using a flat-iron, but though I produced some excellent creases, few of them were in the right place. It is a curious thing that trousers when laid out on a table to be pressed immediately seem to become inhabited by ghostly legs that wriggle about while the iron is being applied. The left leg came out with three separate creases down various parts of the front, and the right leg had an odd diagonal crease that started at the hip-pocket and ended up at the knee. Talking of the hip-pocket reminds me of another tragedy that impeded my work a good deal. I was vaguely conscious when running the iron over the hip-pocket of a rather attractive odour of cooking, and when I put my hand inside the pocket to investigate I encountered the remains of an egg. Sympton's excellent vice-chairman won six eggs in the raffle after the whist-drive last Friday, and kindly presented me with one, which afterwards slipped my memory. It was quite a long job removing all traces of the mess, and I should strongly advise anybody attempting to press trousers to search carefully for eggs before applying the flat-iron.

Frankly, however, I soon lost faith in the flat-iron. I rang up Sympton and asked him how he pressed his trousers, and he said that he put them under the mattress of the bed while he slept. I tried this, but unfortunately mine is one of those beds held together with diagonal pieces of iron, and the trousers came out covered with diamond-shaped depressions instead of with a straightforward crease.



"It's a BOY—bung his name down for the two-seater."

Next I tried putting them under my study carpet while I paced up and down trying to think of an idea for the short speech which Sympton desired me to make. I left the trousers under the carpet all day, and encouraged visiting friends to walk about as much as possible, but the result was again disappointing. There was hardly any sign of a crease, and a mouse had gnawed the left turn-up.

I was beginning to think that I would have to ask to be relegated to the second row on the platform, when Sympton rang up and said that if it were all the same to me he would like my speech to be on the subject of agriculture.

"Splendid," I said. I know very little about agriculture, but I have an excellent pair of knee-breeches and gaiters. By donning these I shall kill two birds with one stone. Sympton's urban audience will mistake me for a farmer, and knee-breeches do not require a crease down the front.

o o

Atomic Energy

"In an attempt to allay the fears of workers at the British atomic research plant—expressed at a Chemical Workers' Union meeting recently—they said that families at Oakridge, Tennessee ('Atom City'), are rearing more children than the rest of the United States."—*"Daily Mail."*

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

George Eliot

MR. GERALD BULLETT has written a delightfully sympathetic and perceptive study of *George Eliot* (COLLINS, 12/6), who has been for some decades the most neglected of the great Victorian novelists. In her later years she was the revered exponent of the peculiar kind of high-minded scepticism which characterized the third quarter of the nineteenth century in England. F. W. H. Myers has recorded how he walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity, listening to the stern accents in which she pronounced that God was inconceivable, that Immortality was unbelievable, and yet that Duty was peremptory and absolute. The compulsion of Duty for Duty's sake, instinctively felt by George Eliot, who had grown up in a strictly religious atmosphere, became progressively fainter between her death in 1880 and the first world-war; and in the thirty years since 1914 her rigid over-intellectualized conceptions have been still further disintegrated by the process of interior exploration associated with Freud in psychology and with Joyce and Marcel Proust in literature. This process has its own drawbacks, and, as Mr. BULLETT suggests in his admirable examination of George Eliot's novels, there is, in spite of her moralizing strain, a solid imaginative reality in her work which the reader of to-day is increasingly likely to appreciate. But the chief value of this book is in its portrait of George Eliot, whose lovable qualities Mr. BULLETT is the first to bring out fully, as he is also the first to do proper justice to George Lewes.

H. K.

Grutching and Grumbling

A war study—*Top Secret* (PARTRIDGE, 15/-)—that has already achieved maximum notoriety in the United States has now been made available in this country and proves to be of curiously mixed quality. In his first-hand account of what he saw in or near the front line during the American army's thrust from Normandy to the Elbe Mr. RALPH INGERSOLL sends his narrative forward in a flood of racy transatlantic sporting idioms and one inaccurate reference to Anglo-Australian cricket as briskly as one could desire, with a real touch for the luminous side-picture and the particular merit that soldiers here are neither heroes nor the reverse, but plain honest fellows. Unfortunately this good fare is sandwiched among a much greater bulk of twisted bad-tempered criticism directed against many of the leading personalities of the war, American and English: Field-Marshal Montgomery must certainly have trodden on the writer pretty hard some time to have incurred so much small hatred, but the author's spite is even more unendurably addressed, because flavoured with a kind of condescending superiority, to General Eisenhower. His main criticism, based on the characteristically uninformed and already refuted supposition that the holding action at Caen was a capital failure redeemed only by unexpected success further west, is made the starting point for a clamorous advocacy of the claims to recognition of General Omar Bradley that must be more annoying than any criticism to that great soldier. It is more serious that he should import into all his claptrap a quite imaginary degree of discord between the allies. The one patch of humour in the book is his representation of America's chosen leaders in London as innocent suggestible dupes of the urbane and plausible British.

C. C. P.

Portrait of a Stepmother

Conjugal morals are odd things, for, religion apart, there are few who object nowadays to a certain amount of extra-matrimonial truancy. But let a married rake omit the usual gestures of monogamy from his will, and the truffle-hounds of scandal are at once unleashed. When it was discovered that Sir Daniel Archer had left all his mistresses but one well provided for at the expense of the second Lady Archer, his set—and what a set!—was as shocked as it was intrigued. Helena Archer, a belatedly married mistress herself, took the reduction of her income stoically. It happened in the London of the rocket-bomb; and what troubled Helena was not sudden death or sudden penury but the gradual onset of old age. The measures she took to avert this common fate are the theme of *An Avenue of Stone* (JOSEPH, 10/6). As if Helena's inveterate juvenility were not sufficient handicap, Miss PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON has lent her own lively and ultra-female pen to a male narrator. But you need not take Major Archer very seriously until he makes a last decisive appearance before a neatly contrived curtain. This leaves Helena—who undoubtedly has worked for it—with the centre of the stage, an explicable past and a tolerable future.

H. P. E.

What Goes On?

One is tempted to think that Mr. P. H. NEWBY's novel, *Agents and Witnesses* (CAPE, 9/-), was deliberately injected by the author with a dose of "significance." His earlier book, *A Journey to the Interior*, received a great deal of respectful attention, and a reader who found this a little surprising was ready to assume a lack of perceptiveness on his own part; this time he is inclined to be more critical. In the narrative itself there are many excellently-conveyed pictures: the scene, an island in the Mediterranean, is brightly and clearly presented to one's mind, whether it is a portrait of a real place or not. But the pattern of incident is baffling and seems to have defeated even the writer of the blurb. Beginning as if it is all to be told from the point of view of the principal character, Pierre Bartas, a young French architect, the story proceeds to reveal the author's method as "omniscience"—we see into the minds of several other characters whenever it is found convenient to let us. So far from helping us to grasp the novel's theme, this tends merely to make it all more vague. There is a sort of love-story; there is a good deal of political and revolutionary activity, involving the millionaire Soureili Pasha and his son; meanwhile a province is being ravaged by a lethal form of malaria, important and less important personages die, and towards the end Pierre—this is what strikes one reader as consciously and pretentiously introduced—has a long mystical interview in a monastery where a priest at first seems to "understand" and then seems not to. The book is an interesting group of well-handled episodes; its unifying idea is well hidden from the ordinary reader.

R. M.

Frank Thompson

FRANK THOMPSON was educated at Winchester and Oxford, volunteered when war was declared, and arrived in the Middle East at the close of the Greek campaign. From November 1941 until the late spring of 1942 he served in the Libyan campaign; then, after some months in Persia, took part in the Sicilian landings, and in due course volunteered for service in the Balkans. During these years he had been studying a number of languages, including Russian, and by October 1943 he could speak

nine European languages. Although a first-rate officer, he chafed at the limitations of Army life. "Life for me," he wrote in October 1942, "means working in close comradeship to a clearly-sighted end . . . As you can imagine, I shall never realize this ideal of life as an officer in the British Army." The title of this memoir, *There is a Spirit in Europe* (GOLLANCZ, 12/6), is taken from a letter he wrote home on Christmas Day 1943. In it he spoke of a spirit abroad in Europe, "the confident will of whole peoples, who have known the utmost humiliation and suffering . . . to build their own life once and for all." Disgusted by the mistrustful attitude of the authorities towards the Greek partisans, THOMPSON volunteered for service in Bulgaria, where he fought with the Bulgarian partisans, and made a magnificent end, vividly described by a Bulgarian eye-witness. He could write, too, and the letters and diaries of which this memoir is composed reflect an unusually perceptive mind.

H. K.

Hellas in London

Demetrios Capetanakis (LEHMANN, 10/6) seems to have spent his speculative life trying out such fragments of Christianity as he found in other and less coherent philosophies. He died in 1944, aged thirty-two, without reconciling the light he needed to the darkness he knew, or either of them with that "need for the tangible" which, as a disciple of Stefan George, he shared with Doubting Thomas. Athens, Heidelberg and London fostered his undoubtedly great gifts. Professor Canellopoulos, John Lehmann, Edith Sitwell and William Plomer add their eulogies to this posthumous collection of his prose and poetry. His five English years seem to have been wholly spent among the metropolitan coteries of the 'thirties and 'forties; and his poetry chiefly consists of "cryptic . . . hints of what to hope and how to live." His criticism, on the other hand, is self-confident, mature, and meditated into an admirable lucidity. "Stefan George" tells you by implication almost as much about George's one-time disciple as about George himself. The same thing may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of "A Lecture on Proust." "Notes on Some Contemporary Writers" shows a profound awareness of the limitations of its subject, while "A View of English Poetry" records a noble approach to what the writer held to be the world's greatest poetry expressed in the world's most poetic and enduring language.

H. P. E.

Poet's Story

Mr. Whittle and the *Morning Star* (SAMPSON LOW, 7/6) is not, you will be glad to hear, a powerful revelation of the whirlwind world of journalism but another of the short and delicate novels into which Mr. ROBERT NATHAN packs so much gentle observation of the ups and downs of the battered human spirit. Mr. NATHAN sees things not rosily, for his characters (and this goes for Mr. Whittle) can be exceedingly unhappy, but with a detachment which brings comfort because it is the detachment of a poet and not the abstract inhumanity of a scientist. Depressed as Mr. Whittle is by his conviction that the world, having so foolishly monkeyed with the atom, is about to blow up, desperate as he is driven by his own infatuation for the nicely curved Miss Andrews and by the spectacle of his temperate wife under a lamp-post in the embraces of the vice-president of a bank, surprising and even ruffling as he finds his initial interview with God, he is borne up in adversity by a touching belief in truth and a childish love of beauty, two qualities which for all his modesty set Mr. Whittle at a distance from many of his fellows. He



"Doesn't seem to sear your soul much after the first two nights, does it, Irene?"

is a professor in a backwoods college in America and his circle is small, but Mr. NATHAN uncovers his heart in such a way that we feel that what is happening to him is, differently tricked out, just what happens to us and also to truck-drivers in Baluchistan. It is in fact the universal in which this author deals, lighting it with searching wisdom and expressing it in language of exquisite simplicity. In an age of wisecracks his mild and mellow humour is greatly refreshing, and it goes without saying that he deserves to be much better known over here than he is.

E. O. D. K.

Men for Pieces

As a novelist Mr. NEVIL SHUTE goes from strength to strength, experimenting, drawing out life as he sees it, and setting it before us in ordered pattern. *The Chequer Board* (HEINEMANN, 9/6) begins conventionally. John Turner, demobilized after war and retaining, as souvenir, a great wound in his forehead, has settled down to business again when he is obliged to consult a specialist about attacks of vertigo. He is given a time-limit to life, and decides to spend the remaining months in looking up three acquaintances with whom he had shared (under guard) a hospital ward after an aeroplane smash. The rest of the story, which describes his search and its results, takes him to Burma, where he stays with the pilot, now married to a Burmese girl, to Cornwall, where the Negro had settled down with an English wife, and the corporal (after serving a sentence for manslaughter) was driving a butcher's van. The book is not a diatribe on the colour problem, but it presents it quietly, humanely and without sentimentality. It is not an anti-war pamphlet, but it shows (in the scene where the corporal is tried for his life) that we cannot teach young Commandos that killing can be an automatic reaction without expecting an aftermath. Mr. SHUTE has written a thoughtful, kindly and reasonable book in which all the characters are alive and vulnerable. His hero is heroic within rather severe limitations, but we are forced to love him for all that he stands for. In fact *The Chequer Board* is a notable novel.

B. E. B.



"You see, Mr. Carlo, there's nothing really sensational about your act—I can do it myself."

Through the Looking-Glass

TAKING my sandwich from the lady behind the counter I go as far away as I can and sit in a chair close to and facing the wall. That is how I feel when I have just missed a train. It strikes me as a calculated piece of perversity that even with my back to the refreshment-room I can still see it: the wall against which my toes are thrust is an expanse of mirror from about four feet up. I can see my hat in it. The brim I laboured over with a steaming kettle is still curling in the wrong places, but I do not care enough for popular opinion this morning to take it off.

I can also see the lady behind the counter. I notice that her hair is red and not mouse as I had thought. She is wearing an expression of defiance, and from my own experience I know that this must be directed at an approaching customer; he presently comes into my view, a well-dressed

man as far as I can see (from the waist up, that is) with an expensive dispatch-case under his arm. He has an air of courtliness and distinction and his hat, which is also expensive, curls with exasperating rightness.

He moves gracefully to the counter and waits there with a proper sense of diffidence until the lady behind it gives him a tiny backward jerk of the head to show that if he has any request to make he may now make it. He has and does. He says clearly but (to me) startlingly:

"Small bitter, Gert, and keep your thumb out of the glass."

Gert does not immediately reply, but her expression does not change to one of anger. It does not change at all. She moves to the tea-urn and causes a plume of steam to shoot briefly about her head. Then, "Manners," she says mildly. "Can't none of you never ask for nothing nicely?"

The well-dressed man looks at the ceiling. "Git out of it," he says. I cannot see his face. I wish I could, because it might afford a clue of some sort. "Come orf it," he adds.

"And you can tell some of your mates," says Gert, handing him a thick cup of well-slopped tea which he appears to accept without surprise or resentment, "to turn up all that whistlin' and carrying-on at me and Lily every time we put our noses out of the buffy."

"Gar," says the well-dressed man. "Aren't we getting partic'lar, eh?" He hands her a coin with the hint of a bow, and raises his expensive hat as he turns away. I can see that he is coming in my direction and I twitch my chair round a point or two, affecting a close interest in my newspaper as a further precaution. I hear the thump of his cup on the table beside me, and cannot forbear to

glance up to see how much of him is visible in the mirror. But he is one of those men whose carriage gives them extra inches, and now that he is seated at my elbow I cannot even see his hat. It is something to be spared that.

I am also spared the embarrassment of an unwanted conversation, as it happens. His previous one is not yet finished.

"Saw old Ted, Friday," he announces. His voice, reinforced to cover the extra distance, is loud in my ear. "Down the Royal."

Gert is not very interested. "And he's another one," she says, temporarily concealed under the counter. "It's like they say, birds of a feather." She reappears and mops down the counter, flinging the swab out of sight with a curiously belated boom, suggesting mysterious hollow caverns in the depths of the station. Another customer is approaching, a thin woman in an imitation fox cape. Gert gives her a contemptuous glance and turns away to reshuffle huge stacks of cigarettes. Her voice comes clearly, nevertheless.

"You want to let the stationmaster catch you in here again, that's all," she says.

"Get away, who's he think *he* is," surprisingly answers the thin woman, putting a hand like a bundle of twigs up to her back hair.

"I'm only telling you," says Gert—and then, as if relenting a little, "Coffee, is it?"

The thin woman says nothing. Up to now I have only been able to see her back view, but now she turns sideways, and at first her pursed lips and drawn-in chin suggest to me that she is quelling a minor outbreak of digestive insubordination . . . then, to my astonishment I hear the opening bars of "Old Man River," hummed resonantly at about Robeson pitch.

Gert is unruffled. She hands the thin woman a little whisky in a big glass. "... and you land in ja-ail ..." sings the woman.

"Who do you think you are, Frank Sonata?" suddenly demands my distinguished table-companion.

"And don't go sitting in one of the arm-chairs!" shrills Gert menacingly from behind the tea-urn.

"Frank Sonata," says the well-dressed man again, laughing and slapping the table. I see with a start that his fingers terminate in broken and blackened nails, and in spite of myself I let my eyes travel to his cuff . . . frayed and dirty . . .

It suddenly seems very warm, and I take off my hat. When I see that its

reflection in the mirror has stayed where it is I spring to my feet and look down at my sitting reflection—a middle-aged man asleep over half a bun.

"Come over queer, cock?" says the man beside me. I stare at him. He is a thickset, dirty man, and the badge on his peaked cap says frankly, GREASER. No doubt it is ungrateful of me not to answer, but I need air.

I turn and push past a man in overalls, catching a snatch of vibrant bass in one ear; I vault the extended feet of the bookstall boy (in one of the arm-chairs, after all) and leap through the swing-door on to the platform.

An exactly similar swing-door ten yards away is opened at just about the same time by a well-dressed man with an expensive dispatch-case under his arm. He holds it courteously for a thin woman in an imitation fox cape to come out, and raises his expensive hat politely.

My only consolation for a horrible experience is that when I glance nervously in a slot-machine mirror—a real one, this time—I see that although my hat is not quite as correctly curled as that of the well-dressed man, it is at least a good deal superior to that of the middle-aged man with the bun.

J. B. B.

Lark

TOSSED sunwards in the summer
air
Leaf-light and buoyant as a
feather,

Riding the sky and singing clear
In the cloudless weather

The lark capers and caracoles;
In cool and lovely clarity

His outpoured song scatters and falls—
Morning's sweet charity.

He curvets on the clouds, his flight
Launched on the crest of summer's
brightness,
Ravelling the senses with delight,
In rapt remoteness.

Summer is caught up in his play;
His cadences fall clearly, swifter
Than swallows. His is the voice of
joy,
The speech of laughter. M. E. R.



"It's just a bit of a send-off party for the cashier, sir.
He's absconding to-morrow."

An Experiment with Time-Tables

AS a schoolmaster of long standing I feel it my duty to point out that our method of teaching arithmetic is now hopelessly out-of-date and that the answers at the back of our text-books (teachers' copies of course) are in need of immediate revision. Arithmetic concerns us all, as taxpayers, pools speculators, average-mongers or queuers, and I make no apology, therefore, for offering some account of the incidents which provoked my discovery.

I will start at the beginning. Last Friday I began my hour with the Lower Threes of St. Morbid's by setting problem five on page 137 of *Post-War Arithmetic** ("Pilot" Series, Book III), by Mason and McGillow. Schoolmasters will recognize it as one of the "old faithfuls"—a problem guaranteed to keep the boys quiet for a good ten minutes.

If five men working ten hours a day can dig a trench one thousand yards long in thirteen days, how many days will it take seven men working eight hours a day to dig a trench seven hundred and fifty yards long?

The boys sucked their pencils and I settled down at my desk to check the answer. (A master who mucks in with his pupils, sharing their problems and difficulties, is always more popular than the fellow who openly consults and relies on the list of answers.) I had barely written the words "Dear Harry . . ." when I heard murmurings

* Post 1914-18, of course. There is an acute shortage of paper at present and new text-books are in very short supply. Even the Government's consumption is only up by about seventy-five per cent.

and became aware of a forest of hands fluttering before me.

"Well, Foskett," I said to a boy whom I have always regarded as a potential ring-leader, "what is it now?"

"Insufficient data, sir. It doesn't say whether they're on a six-day or a five-day week."

"But you don't need to know that," I said. "The answer is given in days."

For some reason or other the whole form laughed at this and it was several moments before I could restore order to my complete satisfaction.

"But, sir," said Foskett, "if they switched over to a five-day week the trench-thing would be dug in next to no time by fewer chaps."

At this point I resorted to a stratagem which rarely fails to stimulate interest and provide a breathing-space. I invited Foskett to the blackboard to prove his theory. He accepted the challenge and moved forward encouraged by the vocal support of Henslow Major. He began by sketching a rough diagram of the trench and the initial team of workmen. When he stepped back to admire his artistry he was immediately bombarded with comments:

"Where's the foreman?" somebody shouted. (Hargreaves, probably.)

"There's no shop-steward!"

"Trench-steward, you mean!"

"Is there a trench-diggers' union?" (Yates, E. R.)

"Must be, the gravediggers were on strike last week."

"Official?" (Yates again.)

"Unofficial?"

"You're thinking of the winding-men!"

To reassert authority I chipped in here with a wisecrack. "It would

seem," I said very loudly—"it would seem that Napoleon Bonaparte, the little corporal, the—er—man of destiny, was wrong: we English are a nation of shop-stewards."

They liked that. Foskett resumed his work at the blackboard.

But it was soon perfectly apparent that his illustration was becoming irrelevant to the point of absurdity at least.

"That will do, boys," I said, sternly. "That's quite enough of that, Master Foskett, thank you! Enough of this nonsense . . ."

"Nonsense, sir! But haven't you read what the miners did in their first five-day week? Give me a chance and I'll show you we're not talking nonsense, sir!"

Challenged in this way the schoolmaster has to decide quickly between an appeal to pure reason or stern disciplinary measures.

"Very well," I said, "prove away."

* * * * *

That, as I said, was last Friday, a week ago to-day. I am writing this at my desk during my hour with Lower Threes, who are reading comics, playing at noughts and crosses, blowing darts and chatting freely. In five more minutes one-third of the hour will be up and the lesson will begin in earnest.

The boys have undertaken to do as much in forty minutes as they would normally do in the hour and I am now fairly certain they will succeed. The experiment is of immense importance and may decide the fate of arithmetic-teaching for years to come. It may decide mine, too, if old Pendleton pops in before eleven-twenty. Hod.



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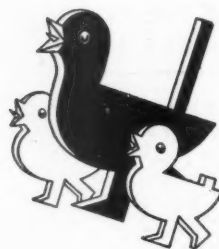
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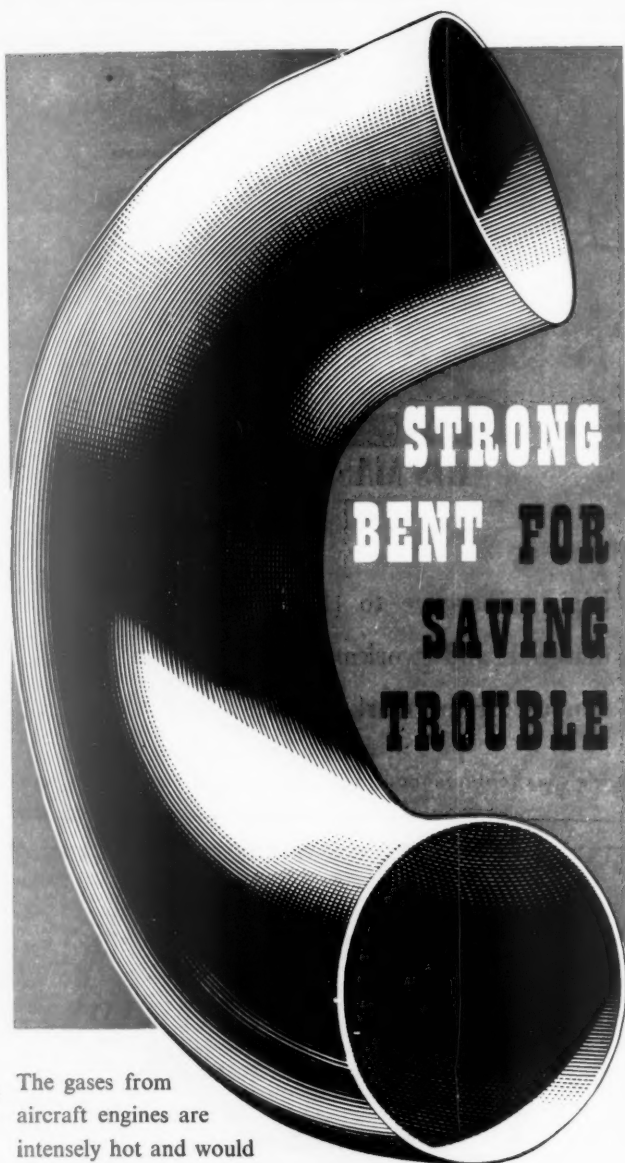


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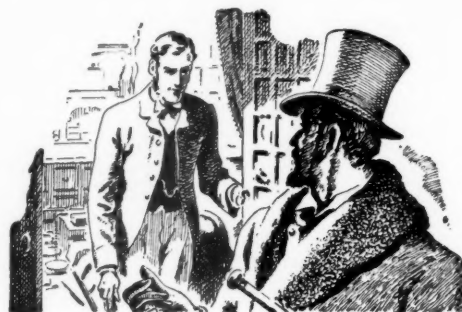
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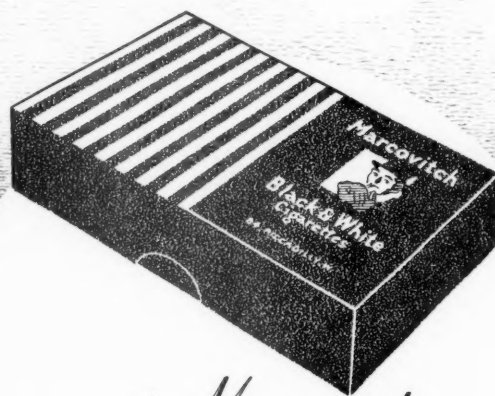
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